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January 2002

### The NEBLINE, January 2002

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## Salt Valley Clean Lakes Project Benefits Area Lakes

Corey Brubaker  
Extension Educator

The Salt Valley Clean Lakes Project was initiated in 1993 in response to a 1990 Clean Lakes Study conducted by the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District in cooperation with the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ), which found that nonpoint source pollution was impairing water quality in area lakes.

The Salt Valley Clean Lakes Project provided a staff person whose primary responsibility was to implement the following objectives :

- Increase public awareness of nonpoint source pollution and its impact on area lakes; and
- Encourage landowners in the watersheds above these lakes to adopt additional conservation and management practices that would reduce nonpoint source pollution.

Two watershed projects have been completed since the project was initiated, one above **Wildwood Lake** in northwestern Lancaster County and one above **Holmes Lake**. A third project in the watershed above **Olive Creek Lake** in southwestern Lancaster County is nearing completion and a community-based planning process was started last summer to develop a watershed management plan for the watershed above **Wagon Train Lake**. A similar process is planned for the watershed above **Yankee Hill Lake** sometime this year. In addition to those watersheds, smaller projects have also been completed in the watersheds above **Branched Oak Lake**, **Pawnee Lake** and **Meadowlark Lake**.

**THE WILDWOOD LAKE WATERSHED PROJECT** was started in 1991 and completed in

1997. The primary focus of the project was to work with individual landowners in the watershed to encourage them to install conservation measures to reduce sediment loading to the lake. By the time funding for the project expired, 16 landowners in the watershed had completed 22 different conservation projects at a total cost of more than \$233,000. As a result of their efforts, sediment loading to Wildwood Lake was reduced by 30 percent.

**THE HOLMES LAKE SUB-WATERSHED PROJECT** was started in 1995 and completed in 1999. The primary focus of the Holmes Lake Project was the construction of an eight-acre wetland complex along Antelope Creek just upstream from the lake and the renovation of an existing wetland/sediment trap. The projects were completed in 1996 at a total cost of \$444,172. Studies conducted by the NDEQ in 1996 and 1997 indicated that the wetland complex was effective at removing total suspended solids, total and dissolved phosphorus, kjeldahl nitrogen, and nitrate/nitrite nitrogen. In addition, the studies found that median concentrations of fecal coliform bacteria were 50 percent lower below the wetland complex than above while median concentrations of fecal streptococcus bacteria were 39 percent lower below the wetland.

**THE OLIVE CREEK LAKE WATERSHED Project** was initiated in 1998 and is similar in focus and scope to the Wildwood Lake Project. To date,



The Antelope Commons Constructed Wetlands (above) was the centerpiece of the Holmes Lake Sub-

eight landowners in the watershed have completed 11 conservation projects at a total cost of \$119,636. In addition, at least three more projects have been approved for cost share assistance and should be completed this spring.

The Salt Valley Clean Lakes Project was a cooperative project involving the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District, the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It was funded by a Section 319 grant from EPA through the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality. Other cooperating partners included the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the USDA Farm Service Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Nebraska Game



Water and sediment control basins (above) and sediment trapping/tile outlet terrace systems were the most popular practices installed by landowners in the Olive Creek Lake and Wildwood Lake watersheds.

and Parks Commission, the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, the Departments of Biological Systems Engineering and Forestry, Fisheries and Wildlife at the University of Nebraska, the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department and the City of Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department.



This in-lake sediment and nutrient trap was installed above Wildwood Lake in December 1993 and provided a model for similar structures in Olive Creek Lake and Wagon Train Lake.

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### Lancaster County Extension PROGRAMS & EVENTS HOTLINE

**323-1784**  
featuring up-to-the-minute information

### Lancaster County Extension WEBSITE

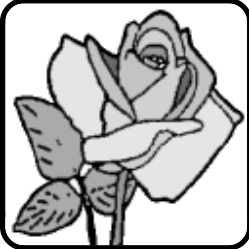
**lancaster.unl.edu**  
featuring extensive online resources

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## Horticulture

### Wood For Your Fireplace

A popular source of additional heating for many homeowners and apartment dwellers is the burning of wood. Sitting around the fireplace to enjoy a relaxing evening at home is another benefit of burning wood in your fireplace.

To do this most effectively, keep these things in mind: ash, birch, hickory, oak, sugar maple, apple, honeylocust and osage orange are considered excellent woods as they produce few sparks, no heavy, annoying smoke, are easy to split and give off a relatively high heat to the room.

With regard to the previously mentioned factors, the second best group of woods include silver maple, walnut, hackberry and fruit woods other than apple. These are considered good to use, but generate less heat than the first group.

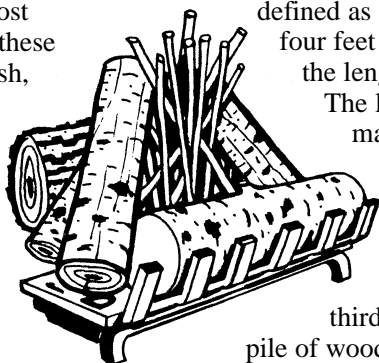
Woods considered fair include sycamore, boxelder, willow, other elms, linden, cottonwood, white poplar, pine, spruce and cedar. This third group should be considered as the last resort, while the first

group should be encouraged.

Firewood is sold in a number of ways. If you buy a cord, the size of the pile will be four feet by four feet by eight feet or 128 cubic feet. Retailers of firewood may also sell by the face cord. A face cord being defined as a pile of wood four feet by eight feet by the length of a stick.

The length of the stick may be anything from 12 inches to 20 inches. A rick or a run is another term used, which is a third of a cord or a pile of wood four feet by eight feet by 16 inches. If you buy a pick-up load, this could mean almost anything. One must estimate how much they are getting by measuring the number of cubic feet of wood being delivered.

Large logs should be split to average diameter size of six inches, this will be a fair size and satisfactory from the user's standpoint. Whether you purchase a cord, face cord, rick, run or pick-up load, you would be well advised to purchase wood in smaller pieces. Larger pieces stack with more air in a given volume and would take up more space. (MJF)



### Needle Diseases of Conifers

Dothistroma needle blight, Sphaeropsis tip blight or both diseases are common problems on the long needled pines (Austrian pine and ponderosa pine) and are fairly easy to recognize. If either of these diseases have plagued your trees, plan to control them this next spring.

Dothistroma needle blight, which occurs primarily on

Austrian, ponderosa and mugo pines usually occurs first on lower branches. Infected needles show yellow to reddish-brown spots or bands that extend around the needles. Needles die from the banded area to the tip. Diseased needles drop prematurely.

see CONIFERS on page 11

#### Horticulture information center

NUFACTS  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
1-800-832-5441; or  
441-7188 in the Lincoln area

To listen to a NUFACTS information center message, call the number above on a touch-tone phone, then enter a three-digit number listed below. Call 441-7180 to receive a brochure with all the NUFACTS message topics.

NUFACTS	
117	Tree Snow Damage
124	Wood for Fireplace
137	Deicing Salt Injury
210	Amaryllis
212	Swedish Ivy
213	Prayer Plant
214	Houseplant Insects
215	Cyclamens
217	Boston Fern
218	African Violet Care
222	Winter Houseplant Care
223	Repotting Houseplants
224	Houseplant Artificial Light

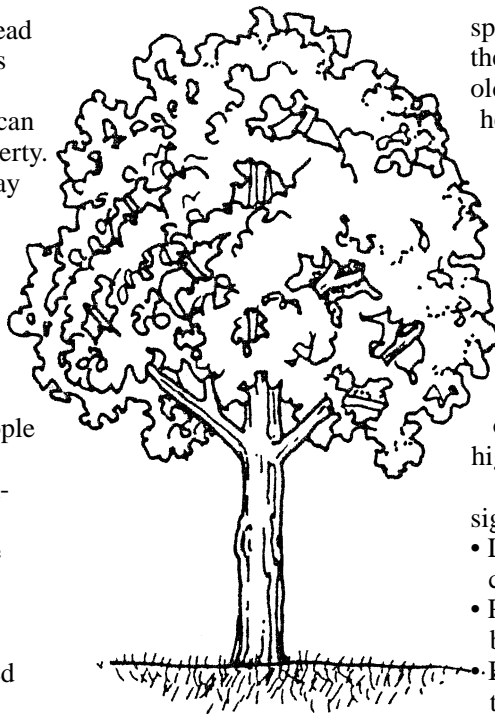
## Recognizing Living, Hazardous Trees

Most people realize dead trees should be removed as soon as they are detected, however, living trees also can be a threat to life and property. A living hazardous tree may have one or more defects which decreases its structural integrity and gives it an increased potential for failure. Unfortunately, this potentially deadly combination of defective trees with areas where people or their property stop and congregate are all too common in today's urban and residential landscape. Tree managers or home owners must have the ability to identify and then correct hazardous situations caused by defective trees.

Trees are complex and highly adaptable organisms. Knowing how trees are constructed, function and respond to wounding can help home owners understand the eventual aging process and ultimately insure the safety of people who work and play near them.

Trees have massive stems that support and elevate the leaves. The stem is also the transport system for moving materials from the root to the leaves and back again. Tree stems must grow every year. Each spring and summer a new sheath of living wood covers last year's tree. If a tree cannot grow every year, it will decline and die. A cross section of a tree trunk has many layers. The outside of the tree is dead bark which protects the tree. The inner bark or phloem tissue is alive and carries food manufactured in the leaves to lower, aboveground portions of the tree and to the roots. The layer between the bark and wood is called the cambium. The cambium produces wood cells to the inside and bark cells to the outside.

Actively growing cambium results in an increase in stem diameter. In addition, the cambium is a major reaction site that responds to injury. Inside the cambium are annual rings of wood. The large pores in each annual ring (xylem) are dead, but are still capable of transporting water to the leaves. Nearly all of the volume of a tree is wood or xylem. If these woody tissues become unsound for any reason, such as internal decay, then most of the structural support for the tree will be compromised. The tree will remain alive, however, because the living cells near the cambium will continue to grow, laying down new phloem and xylem tissues. The result is a relatively healthy-looking tree with a functional outer sheath, but one that lacks sufficient



structural strength from wood to support itself, particularly during extreme weather events.

A tree's structural support is most important during high winds or when snow and ice have accumulated on branches. For example, accumulation of ice can increase the branch weight of trees by 30 times or more. This additional weight may not pose a problem for relatively young trees, however, as trees grow old, they are less able to compartmentalize or seal-off injured portions of the tree and decay is more common. In addition, older trees have a greater tendency to shed branches due to unavoidable decline in wood quality.

Besides age, growth rate and ability to respond to injury will influence a tree's functional life span. Fast growing trees like silver maple, poplar and willow allocate a relatively small portion of internal resources to building compartments that keep pests and decay from spreading. Instead, they rely upon a rapid rate of growth to outdistance decay-causing pathogens. But as they age, their rate of growth slows, and significant decay and structural failure become likely. On the other hand, trees like oak grow slowly and allocate a significant proportion of resources to defense. These trees compartmentalize wounds, and in general, are long-lived and less likely to fail.

There are four ways that living trees become structurally unsound:

- (1) internal decay in the trunk and large branches
- (2) cankers and canker-rots
- (3) cut roots and root decay
- (4) poor branch attachment

#### Internal Decay

Decay in living trees is the end result of many complex interactions between the tree and several groups of fungi and bacteria. Many of these microorganisms are opportunistic and enter through wounds. Healthy and vigorous trees have adequate defense systems that limit the

spread of decay caused by these pathogens, however, older trees or those in poor health are at a disadvantage, and extensive columns of decay often result. Once decayed tissue takes over a large volume of the trunk, the tree will be unable to support its own weight and may fail at any time (even though failure is most likely to occur during periods of high wind).

Here are the warning signs of internal decay:

- Large, wide wounds or cavities
- Presence of fungal fruiting bodies or conks
- Bleeding (oozing sap) through the bark
- Presence of carpenter ants, termites, nesting holes and bee hives
- Loose, cracking bark
- Overall poor appearance, slow growth or twig and branch die-back

#### Cankers and Canker-rots

Cankers, localized dead areas on the bark caused by bark-inhabiting microorganisms, also can lead to structural instability in a tree. Cankers on the trunk and branches are inherently weak spots and trunk and branch failure may occur at old cankers. Canker-rots occur when microorganisms attack and decompose the wood beneath the canker and adjacent bark tissues. Most canker-rots are likely to cause tree failure because of the combined effect of dead bark around the circumference of the tree (from the canker) and loss of internal support (from wood decay). Trees with canker-rot are very hazardous and should be removed as soon as possible.

#### Cut Roots and Root Decay

Anything that alters or compromises the structural support provided by any part of the root system decreases the stability of the tree. Two major culprits that jeopardize the integrity of roots are (1) root-rotting pathogens that attack weakened trees or enter through wounds and cause root decay and (2) the severing or cutting of any portion of the root system. In addition, soil erosion, drought, gas leaks, changing the grade around trees, flooding, soil compaction or paving around trees can kill roots. Building, road, and sidewalk construction or utility installation are especially damaging to the roots of nearby trees. Large, heavy

see HAZARDOUS TREES on page 11



# New Arsenic Standards Won't Affect Lancaster Public Water Supplies

The EPA has established an enforceable Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for arsenic for public water systems to be 10 parts per billion. The standard had been 50 parts per billion, since 1942. This new arsenic standard may affect up to 78 public water systems in Nebraska, but none of them are in Lancaster County.

Under the Bush administration, EPA delayed the effective date of the January 2001 arsenic rule to allow additional reviews of the arsenic rule to be conducted. Reports on the science, cost of compliance and benefits analyses were released in October 2001.

The arsenic in most Nebraska water supplies comes from the aquifer from which the water is pumped, although arsenic can be found in some pesticide residues and is a by-product of smelting, glass making and coal mining. Health risks include cancer and vascular disorders. Reducing arsenic from 50 parts per billion to 10 parts per billion will prevent:

- 19 to 31 cases of bladder cancer per year; preventing 5 to 8 deaths from this cancer.
- 19 to 25 cases of lung cancer, preventing 16 to 22 deaths from this cancer.
- Numerous cases of other non-

cancerous diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

There are thousands of private wells in Lancaster County that service rural citizens. Extension recommends domestic well users test their wells for arsenic if they live close to a community that has a high arsenic concentration. Even if your well isn't close to high arsenic areas and you are concerned, it is still relatively inexpensive to have your water tested. Nebraska Health and Human Services System Laboratory (3701 S. 14th St., Lincoln) charges \$14. Call them at 471-2122 and they will mail you a collection kit.

To collect a water sample to test for arsenic, the water sample should be collected after flushing the water lines to make sure the water is being pulled directly from the well and has not sat in the water distribution system for several hours. One could run the faucet for 10 minutes before collecting the water sample, or collect the sample after running a dishwasher or washing machine or any other large use of water in the home.

It is possible arsenic concentrations may vary over time, especially for wells where the groundwater level varies during the year or where the local

aquifer is pumped heavily. If well users suspect the ground-water levels may vary, then they may want to test their water several times over the course of the year. If the arsenic concentration shows little variation, then there is no need to test the well frequently afterwards.

Source: Sharon Skipton, UNL extension educator.

## Arsenic Levels in Lancaster County Community Water Systems

	ug/L = ppb
Bennet	0
Davey	5
Denton	3
Firth	0
Hallam	8
Lincoln	7.6
Malcolm	8
Panama	7.88
Raymond	8
Roca	5
Waverly	4

ug/L = micrograms per liter  
ppb = parts per billion

# Keeping Backyard Birds Safe

Use these guidelines to prevent the occurrence and spread of diseases, including finch eye disease, at your feeders.

• **Give birds plenty of space.** Provide a number of feeders and place the feeders at different heights and distances so birds don't crowd themselves. Large platform feeders are probably best for spreading birds out, but barn-shaped hopper feeders, which protect the seeds from the weather, also work well.

• **Make feeders safe.** If you suspect a bird at your feeder may have eye disease, avoid using a tubular or other feeders that make birds reach their head or bill through the hole to get the seed. The infectious secretions from the eyes and nostrils are left on the feeders and can be easily picked up by the next bird. Tubular feeders that hold thistle seed are not as likely to spread disease because the holes are small enough only the tip of the bird's bill can be inserted.

Check to be sure feeders and bird baths have no sharp points or edges. Cuts may allow infectious organisms to enter. Avoid galvanized containers because they may leach harmful amounts of metals, especially zinc, into the water.

• **Clean up wastes.** Keep the feeder area clean of droppings



and wasted seeds and hulls. Excess seeds and hulls on the ground may become moldy, and some sunflower hulls may interfere with grass or flower growth. A convenient way to clean up is to use a shop or garage-type vacuum cleaner, but you can also use a broom or rake.

• **Keep feeders and bird baths clean.** Clean and disinfect feeders regularly, about once a month. If you suspect sick birds, clean and disinfect more often, about once a week. Bird baths should be cleaned often enough to keep the water fresh, which might be daily or weekly depending on use and weather conditions. After equipment is cleaned, disinfect with a solution of one part liquid chlorine household bleach to nine parts warm water. One option is to immerse feeders completely in the solution for two to three minutes, then allow to air dry. Rinse bird baths thoroughly before refilling.

• **Use fresh food.** Moldy or

spoiled food should be discarded and the containers disinfected. Store food in a cool, dry place in containers that are insect and rodent proof.

• **When sick birds are observed.** If obviously sick birds are observed at your feeders, take the feeders down for a week to 10 days.

Some judgement is needed on whether temporarily removing feeders will actually help stop the disease. This approach probably will be most effective during cold weather and when other feeding stations are not close by. Because birds use a variety of food sources, removing the feeders will not affect other birds except during severe winter extremes such as several days below zero.

• **Finally, spread the word.** Talk to your neighbors who feed birds so they can be aware and take precautions. Birds move among feeders in the neighborhood so if you and your neighbors work together, you will have the most effective prevention program concerning bird bath and feeder management.

Source: House Finch "Eye" Disease, NF97-355. This publication and many others on bird feeding and backyard wildlife are available at no charge from the extension office. Stop by the Lancaster County Extension office to pick up a copy.

## Environmental Focus



Discover a New Hobby!



## Beginning Beekeeping Workshop

March 18 and 19, 6:30–9:30 p.m.  
Cost: \$20  
Call Barb Ogg at 441-7180 for more information.

# Considering Ultrasonic Pest Control Devices? Save Your Money

Barb Ogg  
Extension Educator

A number of gadgets are being marketed to folks who want an easier and safer way to manage pests around the home. These ultrasonic devices are marketed through mail order companies, home shopping cable channels, in gardening magazines and are readily being sold on the internet.

Ultrasonic devices claim to use ultra-high frequency sound waves to chase away birds, bats, rodents and arthropod pests like fleas, cockroaches, silverfish and even spiders. Most of them are designed to plug into an electrical outlet, but there are battery-operated models that have been designed as a flea-repellent collar and pocket-sized cards for outdoor lovers to carry around with them to repel mosquitoes. They range from cheap (\$6.99) to very expensive (\$699.00).

The consensus of researchers who have actually investigated ultrasonic devices is these products do not effectively repel or eliminate pests from homes. In fact, in the 1980's, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) charged several companies with false advertising and required them to make refunds to customers. My guess is it is just a matter of time and the FTC will go after the makers of these other devices also.

The advice, "If it seems too good to be true, it probably isn't true" fits here. There are plenty of non-toxic or low toxic methods to keep pests outside,

but they take a bit more time and effort than plugging an ineffective device into an electrical outlet. These include:

- Mouse control:
- Seal cracks and crevices larger than 1/4-inch.
  - Eliminate weedy growth or vegetation near the house. Mice live in these locations.
  - Use traps and/or glueboards inside the house at the earliest signs of mice.
- Invading insects: (box elder bugs, lady bugs, crickets)
- Again, seal small cracks and crevices
  - Place glueboards in the corners of rooms to catch critters that inadvertently wander inside

Glue boards are one of the easiest trapping methods for invading insects and they are cheap, too. The cheapest are often sold for rodent control, but they readily catch insects that crawl on the floor. There are two types of glue boards. The first is the "tray" type that has a shallow depression filled with a very sticky substance. The second type is a "board" trap—basically a thin piece of cardboard with a sticky layer on it. The board traps are more effective for both rodents and insects—and they are often cheaper than the tray types.

In addition to being inexpensive, sticky traps are completely non-toxic. The biggest problem is when pets or kids get into it. The sticky substance can be removed with vegetable oil, but it will be messy.

For more information about rodent or insect control, contact the extension office at 441-7180.

For more information about rodent or insect control; water quality resources; wildlife resources (including birds); and more, check out our Web site:

[www.lancaster.unl.edu](http://www.lancaster.unl.edu)

Included on this Web site are numerous in-house fact sheets; extension Head Lice resources (including the Telly award-winning video "Removing Head Lice Safely" FREE for viewing online); links to related sites; and more.





## Farm Views

### Fertilizing Crop Land With Biosolids



#### An Educational Workshop about Lincoln's Biosolids Program

Feb. 28, 3:30–8:30 p.m.

Lancaster Extension Education Center,  
444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln

Meet at 3:30 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center and travel to the Theresa Street Wastewater Facility at 4 p.m. for a tour. Educational program is back at the Lancaster Extension Education Center from 6–8:30 p.m.

*Please preregister for this workshop by Feb. 25 with Karen Wedding by calling 441-7180.*

At this biosolids workshop you will learn:

- how wastewater is processed and made safe for application.
- how regulations determine application rates and locations.
- how GPS and GIS technology is used in Lincoln's Biosolids Program.
- how you can reduce your out-of-pocket fertilizer costs.
- biosolids improves soil tilth, especially on poor or eroded soil.
- biosolids increases organic matter and water holding capacity.
- biosolids usually increases crop yields for several years after just one application.

### Farm Management Web Page Added

If farming is the equivalent of running a manufacturing business, crop and livestock production is equivalent to the factory and farm management is equivalent to the "front office." People need ready access to farm management information. In recognition of this need, a farm management section has been added to the Lancaster County Extension, Ag & Acreage website and a new button has been added to the navigation bar.

This site features information from the University of Nebraska and other mid-western land-grant universities on leasing arrangements, estate planning, risk management, marketing, crop and livestock budgeting and taking best advantage of the farm program.

To access the Ag & Acreage web page, point your browser to:

**[www.lancaster.unl.edu/ag](http://www.lancaster.unl.edu/ag)**

There you will find the Nebraska Production Agriculture Web site along with the navigation bar for quick access to markets, weather, crops, livestock and farm management information plus access to the extension events calendar. (TD)



## Check Condition of Stored Grain

Nebraska experienced one of the nicest falls in recent memory in 2001. We had good drying conditions and temperatures stayed unusually warm well into December. Most grain dried well in the field and required little additional drying to reach normal storage moisture of around 15 percent. One should not forget that moisture content is not the only consideration for safe long-term storage. The temperature of the stored grain is important as well. Maintaining grain temperature below 70 degrees F reduces insect reproduction. Insects become dormant at temperatures below 50 degrees F and many are killed below 32 degrees F. Temperature affects mold growth as well. Mold growth is reduced below 50 degrees F and nearly stops at temperatures below 40 degrees F.

When grain temperature is significantly warmer than the air temperature, convection currents can occur in a grain bin. Air will sink in the cooler grain near the bin wall and rise through the warmer grain in the center of the bin. Warm air moving up through the center carries moisture with it. When the warm/moist air contacts cold grain at the top surface, some of the moisture can condense and

re-wet the grain. Crusted, moldy grain, sometimes with active storage insect activity can result if this condition is not discovered early and corrected by breaking up the crust and running aeration to dry and cool the grain.

To reduce convection currents in the grain, one should aerate whenever the average outdoor temperature is 20 degrees cooler than the grain temperature in the center of the bin. Typically, grain is aerated shortly after harvest in early fall and again in late fall as outdoor temperatures cool into the thirties and forties. When cooling grain, be certain that the cooling front is pushed all the way through the grain mass before discontinuing the aeration. A cooling front pushed part way through the grain can result in moisture condensation in the zone where the two temperatures meet. This is especially important if grain temperature is being lowered more than 20 degrees in one step.

The amount of time required for an aeration cooling cycle depends on the airflow rate. The cooling time can be estimated by dividing 15 by the airflow rate. For example, 75 hours is needed with an airflow rate of 0.2 cfm/bu\*. Check grain temperature at several locations to determine when the cooling front has been pushed completely through the grain. Grain temperature changes about 50 times faster than the moisture content, so the air's relative humidity is of little concern during grain cooling. Once grain has been cooled to below 50 degrees F, the fan could be run intermittently to prevent re-wetting.

When not running the aeration system, remember to close roof hatches to prevent rain and snow from getting into the bin. Cover the fan whenever it's not running to prevent problems caused by the chimney effect that can draw in moist air at the bottom of the bin and up through the grain. (TD)

\* **cfm/bu** = Cubic feet of air per minute per bushel of grain in the bin. The airflow rate produced by a fan is a function of the fan design and the back pressure the fan must overcome. The back pressure is a function of the air delivery system, the type of grain and depth of grain in the bin. Once the type and depth of grain is known, the air flow can be estimated from performance data for the fan. The cubic feet of air per minute produced by the fan, divided by the total bushels in the bin, results in cfm/bu.

## Testing Feed and Balancing Rations Saves Money

Feed is the largest expense of the beef cow/calf operation resulting in 55-65 percent of the total operation cost. Overfeeding increases costs. Inadequate feeding decreases animal performance and reduces profit potential.

Forage testing and ration balancing allows producers to develop a practical method to feed cows and calves a balanced, low-cost diet. The goal is to get the best performance possible with the feed resources available at the lowest cost.

The main advantage of testing and sorting feed for beef cow/calf operations is feeds can be targeted for their best use in the cow/calf enterprise. For example, on a spring-calving cow herd, a lower quality forage could be used during November and December, while animal nutrient demand is lower. The lower quality roughage also generates more heat in the digestion process, and this will come in handy during a time when extra heat can be used.

Top quality feeds should be used near calving time for the cow to recover from calving, to produce milk for the calf and so the cow is ready to be bred again. Depending on location and needs, money also can be saved in such a situation. In comparing average quality alfalfa to higher quality alfalfa, if the average hay can sell for \$55 per ton and high quality, dairy quality or alfalfa with a relative feed value of 150 or higher at \$95 per ton, then determine what feed is needed and how well it



Photo by University of Nebraska Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

will do in the operation. Producers could sell some higher quality feed and buy back cheaper feed, if the time is right.

When buying hay, producers need to be aware of quality factors and base the price on the quality. Because one doesn't know how feeds will test until they are sampled, the most important things to test for are:

- **Moisture content** — Moisture is a measure of the amount of water in the feed. This is important because moisture dilutes the concentration of all nutrients.
- **Energy value** — For beef cow rations, the test for energy is total digestible nutrients (TDN). This is most useful when formulating rations and determining supplements that may be needed.
- **Protein value** — Usually expressed as percent crude protein. If producers must supplement protein, this information can be used to determine the source of protein

that is most economical. As an example, if one had a large quantity of lower quality hay to feed, one could determine whether soybean meal, liquid protein sources, protein blocks or higher protein alfalfa would be the most economical source of supplemental protein to add to the ration to meet the animal's nutrition needs.

Testing for protein content also can help determine how the feed can be fed if it is to be used as a protein source in the ration. For example, protein doesn't have to be fed every day. If it would fit the herd's needs at five pounds a day for 100 cows, that would be 500 pounds of needed protein. If a 1,000 pound bale of hay was put out every other day, the protein need would be achieved. (TD)

*SOURCES: Paul Hay, extension educator, Gage County, NU/IANR; Rick Rasby, Ph.D., beef specialist, NU/IANR*



# “Care and Feeding” of Your Septic Tank

Roger Machmeier, Ph.D., P.E.  
Professor Emeritus,  
University of Minnesota

Since the septic tank is such an essential part of a sewage system, here are some points to remember about the “care and feeding” of that part of the onsite sewage treatment system.

- A “starter” is not needed for bacterial action to begin in a septic tank. Many bacteria are present in the materials deposited into the tank and will thrive under the growth conditions present.

- If you feel that an additive is needed, be aware that some may do great harm. Additives that advertise to “eliminate” tank cleaning may cause the sludge layer to fluff up and be washed out into the drainfield, plugging soil pores. Some additives, particularly degreasers, may contain carcinogens (cancer-causing) or suspected carcinogens that will flow into the ground water along with the water from the soil treatment unit.

- Send all sewage into the septic tank. Don’t run laundry wastes directly into the drainfield, since soap or detergent scum will plug the soil pores, causing failure.

- Normal amounts of household detergents, bleaches, drain cleaners, and other household chemicals can be used and won’t stop the bacterial action in the septic tank. But don’t use excessive amounts of any household chemicals. Do not dump cleaning water for latex paint brushes and cans into the house sewer.

- Don’t deposit coffee grounds, cooking fats, wet-strength towels, disposable diapers, facial tissues, cigarette butts, and other non-decomposable materials into the house sewer. These materials won’t decompose and will fill the septic tank and plug the system. To use a five-gallon toilet flush to get rid of a cigarette butt is also very wasteful of water. Keep an ash tray in the bathroom, if necessary.

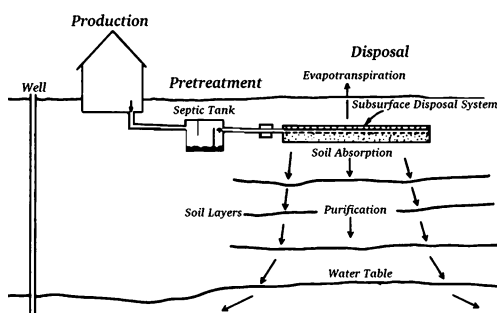
- Avoid dumping grease down the drain. It may plug sewer pipes or build up in the septic tank and plug the inlet. Keep a separate container for waste grease and throw it out with the garbage.

- If you must use a garbage disposal, you will likely need to remove septic tank solids every year or more often. Ground garbage will likely find its way out of the septic tank and plug up the drainfield. It is better to compost, incinerate or deposit the materials in the garbage that will be hauled away. As one ad says, “You can pay me now, or pay me later.”

- Use a good quality toilet tissue that breaks up easily when wet. One way to find out is to put a hand full of toilet tissue in a fruit jar half full of water.

Shake the jar and if the tissue breaks up easily, the product is suitable for the septic tank. High wet-strength tissues are not suitable. As long as the tissue breaks up easily, color has no effect on the septic tank. Many scented toilet tissues have high wet strength.

- Clean your septic tank every one to three years. How often depends on the size of the tank and how many solids go



into it. A rule of thumb is once every three years for a 1,000 gallon tank serving a three-bedroom home with four occupants (and with no garbage disposal).

Here is a word of caution: Never go down into a septic tank. The gases present may poison or asphyxiate you. Only trained professionals should enter a septic tank or any other confined space.

- To properly clean a septic tank, the manhole cover or the tank cover must be removed. This is the only way to be sure that all the solids have been pumped out. A septic tank cannot be cleaned adequately by pumping out liquids through a four inch inspection pipe. Doing so often results in some of the scum layer plugging the outlet baffle when the tank refills with sewage. Be sure that the tank is opened when it is cleaned. At this time the baffles should be inspected and replaced if necessary.

- Recharge wastes from a properly operating water softener will not harm septic tank action, but the additional water must be treated and disposed of by the drainfield. If the softener recharge overloads the sewage system, this waste water can be discharged to the ground surface since it contains no pathogens. But it must be discharged in a location where it will not be a nuisance or damage valuable grass or plants.

- Using too much soap or detergent can cause problems with the septic system. It is difficult to estimate how dirty a load of laundry is, and most people use far more cleaning power than is needed. If there are lots of suds in your laundry tub when the washer discharges, cut back on the amount of detergent for the next similar load. It’s generally best not to use inexpensive detergents which may contain excessive amounts of filler or carrier. Some of these fillers are montmorillonite clay, which is used to seal soils! The best solution may be to use a liquid laundry detergent,

since they are less likely to have carriers or fillers that may harm the septic system.

Each septic system has a certain capacity. When this capacity is reached or exceeded, there will likely be problems because the system won’t take as much sewage as you want to discharge into it. When the onsite sewage treatment system reaches its daily capacity, be conservative with your use of water. Each gallon of water that flows into the drain must go through the septic tank and into the soil absorption unit. Following are some ways to conserve water that should cause little hardship in anyone’s standard of living:

- Be sure that there are no leaking faucets or other plumbing fixtures. Routinely check the float valve on all toilets to be sure it isn’t sticking and the water isn’t running continuously. It doesn’t take long for the water from a leaking toilet or a faucet to add up. A cup of water leaking out of a toilet every minute doesn’t seem like much but that’s 90 gallons a day! So be sure that there is no water flowing into the sewer when all water-using appliances are supposed to be off.

- Installing a water meter is a sure way to know how much water you are using and how much the water use will be reduced by doing certain things. A water meter for a home should cost from \$50 to \$100 plus installation.

- The most effective way to reduce the sewage flow from a house is to reduce the toilet wastes, which usually account for about 40 percent of the sewage flow. Many toilets use five to six gallons per flush. Some of the so-called low-water-use toilets are advertised to use only 3.5 gallons per flush. Usually the design of the bowl hasn’t been changed, however, and often two flushes are needed to remove all solids. That’s seven gallons! Toilets are available which have been redesigned and will do a good job with one gallon or less per flush. Using a one gallon toilet rather than a five gallon toilet will reduce sewage flows from a home by about a third. This reduction may be more than enough to make the sewage system function again. While prices may vary, one gallon toilets can usually be purchased in the \$200 range, far less than the cost of a new sewage treatment system.

- With a water meter, you can determine how much water your automatic washer uses per cycle. Many washers now have settings to reduce the amount of water used for small loads. Front loading washers and suds savers use less water than top loading machines. If your sewage

see SEPTIC TANK on page 11

## Urban Agriculture



## Frozen Pipes

Frozen pipes aren’t just an inconvenience. An average of a quarter-million families have their homes ruined and their lives disrupted each winter ... all because of water pipes that freeze, burst and destroy.

And if you think recovering from frozen pipes is as simple as calling a plumber, think again.

An eighth-inch crack in a pipe can spew up to 250 gallons of water a day, wrecking floors, furniture and keepsakes. Both plastic (PVC) and copper pipes may burst.

Imagine if your pipes were to freeze and break while you were away on vacation: Your homecoming would be a soggy one and your fix-it plea to a plumber would have to be accompanied by calls to a contractor, carpet-layer, painter and furniture store. Damage might be so severe that you and your family would have to move out of your home while repairs are made.

By taking a few simple precautions, you can save yourself the mess, money and aggravation frozen pipes cause. Here are a few simple steps to protect your home or apartment:

Before the cold hits, insulate pipes in your home’s crawl spaces and attic. These exposed pipes are most susceptible to freezing. Remember: the more insulation you use, the better protected your pipes will be.

Heat tape or thermostatically controlled heat cables can be used to wrap pipes. Be sure to use products approved by an independent testing organization, such as Underwriters Laboratories Inc., and only for the use intended (exterior or interior). Closely follow all manufacturer’s installation and operation instructions.

Seal leaks that allow cold air inside, near where pipes are located. Look for air leaks around electrical wiring, dryer vents and pipes. Use caulk or insulation to keep the cold out

and the heat in. With severe wind chill, a tiny opening can let in enough cold air to cause a pipe to freeze.

Disconnect garden hoses and, if practical, use an indoor valve to shut off and drain water from pipes leading to outside faucets. This reduces the chance of freezing in the short span of pipe just inside the house.

A trickle of hot and cold water might be all it takes to keep your pipes from freezing. Let warm water drip overnight, preferably from a faucet on an outside wall.

Open cabinet doors to allow heat to get to uninsulated pipes under sinks and appliances near exterior walls.

If you’re away, set the thermostat in your house no lower than 55 degrees.

Ask a friend or neighbor to check your house daily to make sure it’s warm enough to prevent freezing, or shut off and drain the water system. Be aware that if you have a fire protection sprinkler system in your house, it will be deactivated when you shut off the water.

If your pipes freeze, don’t take chances. If you turn on your faucets and nothing comes out, leave the faucets turned on and call a plumber. If you detect that your water pipes have frozen and burst, turn off the water at the main shut-off valve in the house; leave the water faucets turned on. (Make sure everyone in your family knows where the water shut-off valve is and how to open and close it.)

Never try to thaw a pipe with a torch or other open flame. Water damage is preferable to burning down your house. You may be able to thaw a frozen pipe with the warm air from a hair dryer. Start by warming the pipe as close to the faucet as possible, working toward the coldest section of pipe.

DO NOT use electrical appliances in areas of standing water because you could be electrocuted. (DJ)

## Prevent Home Fires

The single largest cause of home fires in Nebraska is failure or misuse of heating devices. In many of these heating-related fires, the direct cause was combustible (burnable) objects placed too close to a heat source like a fireplace, wood stove or portable electric heater.

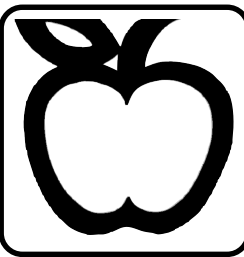
Burnable materials should be kept back several feet from heating devices. Surface temperatures of heating elements and fire boxes can reach several hundred degrees. Follow manufacturer’s recommendations for separation distances and proper venting.

Overloaded electric cords

are also a source of home fires. Many household extension cords are not heavy enough to run devices like power tools and portable heaters. Read the label to find the allowable load (amperage) that the cord can carry. Also make sure that extension cords are never placed under carpets or rugs that can trap heat and cause the cord to overheat.

Being aware of potential fire hazards and keeping working smoke detectors up in your home are your best lines of defense against deadly home fires. (DJ)





## Food & Fitness



*Enjoy Nebraska Foods!*

Karen Wobig, Guest Columnist

Karen Wobig is a nutrition assistant with the Nutrition Education Program for limited resource families. Here are some nutritious recipes she uses in her programs at Lincoln Housing Authority senior residential sites.

### Cranberry-Raspberry Smoothie

1 cup soy milk (plain or vanilla)  
1/2 medium banana (may be frozen if desired)  
2 tablespoons frozen fruit juice concentrate (undiluted)  
1/4 cup frozen fruit

Puree all the ingredients in a blender until smooth. Pour in a glass and serve at once.

*Serves one. Serving size: about 1 1/4 cups. 266 calories, 4 g total fat, 11 g protein, 47 g carb, 2.3 g fiber, 107 mg sodium, 0 mg cholesterol. Source: Nebraska Soybean Board*

### Pumpkin Cake

4 eggs, beaten  
1 can (15 - 16 ounces) pure pumpkin puree  
1 1/4 cup sugar  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
13 ounce can evaporated milk

Mix above ingredients together and put in a 9 x 13 ungreased pan.

#### Topping:

1 yellow cake mix (not with pudding)  
1/2 cup chopped nuts  
1/2 cup melted margarine

Mix topping ingredients and sprinkle over pumpkin mixture. Bake at 350 degrees F for approximately 45 minutes. Cool. Serve with whipped topping or ice cream. Store in refrigerator. Can be frozen in individual servings.

*Source: Mardel Meinke, extension assistant, Nutrition Education Program*

### Veggie Pizza

1 can (10 biscuits) refrigerated biscuits or crescent rolls  
1/4 cup ranch dressing  
1-8 ounce package cream cheese  
Raw vegetables (shredded carrots, chopped broccoli, chopped cauliflower, etc.)  
1 cup grated cheddar cheese

Lightly grease or spray 9x13-inch pan or 12-inch pizza pan. Press biscuits onto pan. Bake at 400 degrees F for 15-20 minutes or until golden brown. Cool. Mix dressing and cream cheese; spread on crust. Arrange raw vegetables on top of crust. Top with grated cheddar cheese and serve. Refrigerate any leftovers.

[Optional: Use low-fat dressing and low-fat cream cheese.]

*Source: University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension*

For more nutrition and food safety information, check our FOOD Web site at:

**www.lancaster.unl.edu/food**

Rated "Among the Best" (see page 12).



# One Diet You Just Can't Fail

Alice Henneman, MS, RD  
Extension Educator

Does it seem like you just can't make any diet plan "stick." As you start out the new year, remember the saying: "Success is getting up one more time than you fall down!"

Try learning from each experience what DID and what DIDN'T work for you. Then, continually adjust your diet, doing the things that worked, until you have a plan that best fits you.

Here's an example:

**SITUATION:** Ima Snacker attempts to stop nibbling on high fat, high sugar snacks at work. The pounds are creeping up!

#### ATTEMPT 1

Ima went cold turkey and completely avoided snacks at work. **Result 1:** Ima got hungry by mid-afternoon and ate a doughnut. She decided since the diet was blown she'd go ahead and have a cookie, too ... and wash it all down with a soft drink!

#### ATTEMPT 2

Ima brought a banana from home to eat as an afternoon snack. **Result 2:** She got called out of the office in the afternoon and didn't eat the banana. Ima went on vacation the next day. Upon return to work a week later, she was greeted by the smell of rotten banana!

*Getting up one more time than we fall down can help us fine-tune a successful — and satisfying — diet plan.*

#### ATTEMPT 3

Ima brought a less perishable snack — a low fat, whole grain cereal bar — to work. **Result 3:** The cereal bar worked just fine; but, she forgot to bring something the next day. Back to the doughnuts! Ima felt frustrated and ate two!

#### ATTEMPT 4

Ima brought enough nonper-

ishable snacks to last a few weeks — individual packages of dried fruit, cartons of juice, low fat crackers, etc. **Result 4:** She had a healthy snack each day for a couple of weeks. Then, she worked late and didn't get around to buying more snacks to replenish her supply. Back to the doughnuts — however, she just ate one this time. And, she cut back on dessert at supper that night.

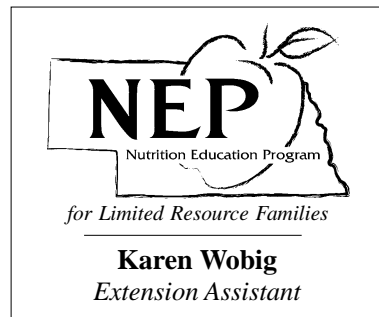
#### ATTEMPT 5

Ima purchased more snacks a few days before the current supply ran out. **Result 5:** SUCCESS! Plus, Ima learned a doughnut now and then as part of a balanced diet can fit in just fine!

Though Ima Snacker's story is fictional, the process she used of learning from her experiences is real. Getting up one more time than we fall down can help us fine-tune a successful — and satisfying — diet plan.

Sometimes success comes through evolution, trying one thing and another until—Eureka! We've got it!

## Seniors Rewarded with Feast



Throughout this past year, residents of three Lincoln Housing Authority senior residential sites enjoyed nutrition classes taught by the Nutrition Education Program. Seniors sometimes find it difficult to prepare well balanced meals when fixing food only for themselves. As a year end reward for attending classes, they were all invited to a holiday feast. The foods chosen represented all the five food groups and showed a variety of colors. Seniors enjoyed a well-balanced meal and much social interaction.

The monthly classes emphasize healthy eating by incorporating all the food groups, so they will receive nutrient-dense foods on a daily basis. Some of the points emphasized during the year were:

- making single serving size portions of foods and how to freeze the left-over ingredients;
- getting five servings of fruits and vegetables each day;



*Seniors from Mahoney, Burke and Crossroads enjoy a holiday feast hosted by the Nutrition Education Program.*

- the variety of grain group foods and the importance of having 6 servings each day;
- how to get calcium that's so important for aging bones; and
- water is a nutrient, too!

Tips on using up foods in your refrigerator and freezing leftovers in individual size servings were discussed often. For example, when making the vegetable pizza (see recipe at left), after cutting up the vegetables you need for the recipe, you can cook the remaining vegetables for dinner the next day or eat them raw with a dip for snack. The remaining ranch dressing in the bottle or jar can be used later for lettuce salads. You can also freeze individual portions of the veggie pizza to eat later.

Making foods colorful and more appetizing was also discussed throughout the year. To enhance the appearance of the veggie pizza, many kinds of vegetables such as red and yellow peppers, green broccoli, white cauliflower, orange carrots, etc. can be used.

Encouraging seniors to occasionally invite others to eat with them after they have made something special has been reinforced this year. Not only does this encourage social interaction, but it prevents having a lot of leftover food.

Some of the recipes prepared and sampled by the seniors are included in this month's Healthy Eating recipes (at left).



## Clean Hands Campaign

Have fun using "glo-germ" to teach handwashing to youth and adults. Receive handouts for your group and a copy of reproduction ready handwashing activities. Call Alice Henneman at 441-7180 to schedule a time to checkout the Clean Hands Kit and receive your materials. Kit must be checked out and returned within the same week. Available on a first come, first serve basis. (AH)



# Clarice's Column



**Clarice Steffens**  
FCE Council Chair

Have you remembered to write 2002 on your checks this month? Seems we just got used to writing 2001 and it was gone! I've always heard time passes more quickly as you grow older and now I really believe that! Two thousand one was a very eventful year and 2002 will, no doubt, be the same. Let's hope for a more peaceful New Year.

The January Council meeting will be held Jan. 28 at

noon. Lunch will be provided by the incoming officers and we will be making a surprise craft. The new officers will be installed.



The cost of the lunch and craft supplies will be \$7.50 and reservations should be made by Jan. 23 by calling Pam at the extension office, 441-7180.

The remaining Council meetings for the year will be March 25, June 24 and Sept. 23. The Sizzling Summer Sampler has been tentatively set for July 15 and Achievement Night is scheduled for Oct. 21.

It's not too early to start planning an entry for the Heritage Skills Contest. This year the categories are rugs, handcrafted toys and spinning and weaving articles. Entry forms are due at the state level by May 1.

The Council will be offering a \$250 scholarship to a graduate of a high school in Lancaster County, or a permanent resident of Lancaster County majoring in family and consumer science or a health occupation. This scholarship is open to full-time students beginning their sophomore, junior or senior year of college in the fall of 2002 or who have completed two quarters of study in a vocational school. Applications will be due April 1 in the extension office. Call Pam at the extension office for an application form.

Serving as Vice Chair and Chair for the Lancaster County FCE clubs has certainly been a learning experience for me! It has been many years since I was a 4-H leader, so this has been an opportunity to again become acquainted with the many things extension has to offer the community. I have had the privilege of meeting many members of FCE, the extension educators and their assistants. It has been a good experience for me and I thank all of you for the opportunity.

Please join us at the extension office for the January Council meeting. This is an opportunity for you to enjoy some time with old and new friends. Everyone is welcome. Happy New Year!

## ★ FCE News ★

### Family Community Education (FCE) Council Meeting

The January FCE Council meeting will be Monday, Jan. 28 at noon. The council officers will prepare lunch. A craft activity will follow the business meeting. The cost for the meal and craft supplies is \$7.50. Please call 441-7180 to preregister. All FCE members are invited to attend and join in the fun. (LB)

### FCE Leader Training Lesson

The February FCE leader training lesson "Positive Communication in Families" will be given Tuesday, Jan. 29 at 1 p.m. This lesson will look at aspects of family communication that bring family members closer together and offer some suggestions for activities that help increase positive interaction in the home. Research at the University of Nebraska for almost 25 years has focused on the qualities of strong families and how we can put these findings to practical use. One of the important family strengths is positive communication.

Non-FCE members interested in attending should preregister by calling Pam at 441-7180 a week before the lesson so materials can be prepared. (LB)

## Living on Less

LaDeane Jha  
Extension Educator

The past year was one of economic uncertainty and confusion for many. Some families have seen a drop or even a loss of income and others are concerned about losses in retirement funds and other investments. For many families the undesirable effects of a cut in income can be minimized by following three basic survival skills: substitute, conserve and utilize existing resources. By managing resources better, many people realize their situation is not as bad as it seems.

Economizing is a principle that means allotting personal and family resources where they will do the most good. It does not

necessarily mean to buy less of an item—it might even imply purchasing more. For example, suppose you decide to increase family income by looking for a different job. A successful job search may require certain clothing or a skill you do not have. It may be worth your while to invest in those resources. However, if you spend more in one area you must decrease spending in other areas.

**SUBSTITUTE** — Find substitutions. Eat at home rather than out. Cook from basics rather than using convenience foods. Rent rather than buy costly equipment you seldom use. Most importantly, develop the habit of thinking, "What could I substitute that would do the job for less?"

**CONSERVE** — Avoid

waste. Keep your family healthy and your skills and possessions in good condition. Try to get the most use or satisfaction out of each trip in the car, each use of the oven, each load in the washing machine, each dollar invested in clothing. Continually ask yourself, "How can I make this resource last longer? How can I use it more efficiently?"

**UTILIZE** — Find new uses for resources you already have. Could you rent out a room in your home? Could you car pool? If you bake, sew, tend your own small children or clean your own house, could you expand these into income-producing activities? Think to yourself, "What talents, time or other resources do we have as family members that could be put to use in a new, more productive manner?"

## Make Good Money Choices

Every day we make choices about how to spend money. Too often these choices are made without planning. A spending plan or budget for your household is essential. They will help you live within your income, spend your money wisely, and reach personal goals.

These steps can help you make good money choices.

- 1) Set your monthly and yearly financial goals.

- 2) Determine your monthly income.
- 3) Add all of your fixed expenses and the monthly portion of your yearly expenses. This is the amount you are obligated to spend in one month.
- 4) Subtract the amount you are obligated to spend in one month from your monthly income. This is the amount you have left for flexible

- expenses.
- 5) Add your fixed expenses and your flexible expenses. Subtract this figure from your monthly income. The amount you plan to spend monthly should not be greater than your monthly income.
- 6) Keep track of what you actually spend on flexible items. Avoid spending more than you planned. (LJ)

## Family Living



by Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator

After the holidays, take a few simple steps to keep your linens in fine shape for years to come. Always clean linens before storing to prevent stains and creases from setting. Do not starch before storing as starch may attract unwanted insects. To store linens without unsightly creasing, roll them around empty paper towel or wrapping paper tubes or hang on hangers in the closet. (LB)

## Joy Breaks

Want to get off to a good start in 2002? How about re-discovering your ability to play? "Take a 'Joy Break' from whatever stress-producing activity you are currently engaged in and give yourself permission to play," says Cynthia Schuster of Ohio State University. She suggests you take a piece of paper and divide it into four vertical columns. Mark each column as follows:

- 1) Joy Breaks, Less than 5 minutes
- 2) Joy Breaks, Up to 30 minutes
- 3) Joy Breaks, Up to 2 days
- 4) Joy Breaks, 2 days or longer

Now come up with a list of ideas of fun things you enjoy doing. When you've depleted your list of ideas, put them in the appropriate columns on the card. If you are like the majority of individuals who complete this activity, your ideas probably fit into the last two columns. You have few ideas about how to have small doses of fun. Challenge yourself to think "outside the box" and realize fun comes

in various size doses.

Try some of these ideas for shorter joy breaks:

- Read the comics of funny pages of the newspaper to start your day.
- Read your horoscope. If you don't like what it says, write your own.
- Do an anonymous good deed ... just because.
- Spoil yourself a little. Buy something you've always wanted even though you don't need it.
- Curl up and read something of no educational value whatsoever.
- Go to an afternoon movie.
- Daydream.
- Take an evening "stroll" instead of a "power walk."

Make it a habit to add "joy breaks" throughout your calendar, and then notice the significant improvement in energy, enthusiasm, flexibility, teamwork and productivity.

Sources: McGee-Cooper, A., & Trammell, D. (1994). Time Management for Unmanageable People. (LJ)

## Helping Your Child be a Good Sport

Have you ever walked away from a sporting event completely disgusted by the way some parents behave? Is it any wonder some children have difficulty with the concept of good sportsmanship? The following are some ways in which parents can help children be good sports.

Model good sportsmanship. Children tend to act much like their parents. If good behavior is expected of children, parents should be held to just as high a standard.

Praise children for the

see *GOOD SPORT* on page 11

## CHARACTER COUNTS! Corner

### Crying Wolf

A shepherd boy who watched a flock of sheep near a village brought out village members two times by crying out, "wolf, wolf." When his neighbors came to help him, he laughed at them for their pains. The wolf, however, actually showed up at last. The shepherd boy now really alarmed shouted in agony and terror. "Please do come and help me, the wolf is killing the sheep." However, no one paid any heed to his cries—no one rendered any assistance, the wolf destroyed the entire flock.

Moral: There is no believing in a liar even when he speaks the truth. (BR)







## 4-H & Youth

### 4-H Volunteer Forum

The 2002 Nebraska State 4-H Volunteer Forum will be held Feb. 15-16 in Grand Island. This forum is a conference developed by a committee of 4-H volunteers from across the state. Network with other 4-H leaders, exchange successful 4-H programs among 4-H leaders and be introduced to new areas and projects. There will be numerous workshops offering hands-on learning experiences and new ideas and programs designed to enhance your club. Contact Tracy at 441-7180 for more information. (TK)

### 4-H Club Officer Training

Mark your calendars now for the upcoming 4-H Club Officer Training. All 4-H members are encouraged to attend! Everyone will discover how to conduct a meeting and use parliamentary procedure. 4-H members will also have an opportunity to participate in a mock meeting Sunday, March 3, 6:30-8 p.m. 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. (TK/DK)

### 4-H Bulletin Board

- Teen Council will meet Sunday, Feb. 10 from 3-5 p.m.
- Pet Pals Small Animal Club will meet Tuesday, Feb. 12 at 6:45 p.m.
- Lancaster County Horse VIPS will meet Wednesday, Feb. 13 at 7 p.m.
- Plan to attend the Rabbit VIPS will meet Thursday, Feb. 14 at 7 p.m.



### 4-H Cat Club Reorganizing

Do you have a cat? Do you want to know about taking care of it? The Lancaster County 4-H Cat Club is just the place for you! Join us for an evening of fun!

**What:** Lancaster County 4-H Cat Club

**When:** Tuesday, Feb. 12 at 7 p.m.

**Where:** Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln.

For more information, call Arlene at 441-7180.

### Speech Workshop

Come one ... come all ... to the 2002 4-H Speech Workshop, Sunday, Feb. 10 from 6-7:30 p.m. This workshop will help all ages of 4-H members to write and deliver speeches and public service announcements.

Parents and leaders are encouraged to attend, to find out more about the contest, and to become prepared to assist the youth in their development. We hope to see you there! (DK/TK)

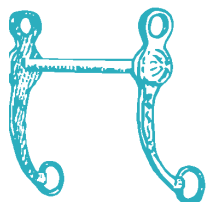
### Leather Workshop

Lancaster County is implementing a 4-H Leather Project! This county-only project is designed to allow youth to explore leather craftsmanship. Attend a Feb. 21 workshop at 7 p.m. and learn the basic history of leather, leather tools, the principles of good design and go home with a simple leather project. **RSVP by Feb. 15** by calling 441-7180. Mark your calendars for Workshop II, Saturday, March 16 at 9:30 a.m. (TK)

### Spring Rabbit Clinic & Show

The Lancaster County 4-H Spring Rabbit Clinic will be held Thursday, March 14, 6:30-9 p.m., at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. We will cover many topics including showmanship, static exhibits, grooming and care of your animal.

We will follow with a 4-H Rabbit Show at 9 a.m., Saturday, March 16, in the Small Animal Building at the Lancaster Event Center. Mark your calendars and look for a flyer in next month's NEBLINE.



## HORSE BITS

### NU's Veterinary Diagnostic Center on Lookout for West Nile Virus

West Nile virus is expected to make its way to Nebraska by spring of 2002, and the University of Nebraska's Veterinary Diagnostic Center is gearing up to track the virus.

West Nile is a mosquito-borne virus that has existed for many years in the Middle East, West Asia and Africa. It was first reported in the United States in 1999, spread along the East Coast in 2000 and made its way to the Midwest this year, with cases documented in Wisconsin, Iowa and Missouri.

The virus can infect people, birds and some mammals, including horses. Most people who are infected don't become ill. When symptoms occur, they range from those of a mild flu to encephalitis in severe cases. Less than one percent of severe cases are fatal, according to U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention information.

"One of the main reasons we are concerned about West Nile virus is

because it is an exotic disease," said David Steffen, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources veterinarian and director of NU's Veterinary Diagnostic Center. "It's important for us to track this disease as it spreads across the continent, and to alert the public and to minimize the risk of infection. If we know where the virus is, we can try to help minimize its impact by vaccinating horses and by mosquito control."

Often, the first sign of West Nile virus in a region is unusual bird die-offs, particularly crows. Crows and blue jays are unusually susceptible to the virus and crows may feed on other birds that have died, Steffen said. Other birds, such as sparrows, replicate virus and spread infection but will not become ill.

"We have run a few negative tests this year for West Nile virus but we expect to see many more potential cases in the spring when mosquitoes become active again," he said. The Veterinary Diagnostic Center has purchased equipment to safely handle infected birds and to run tests which identify viral

genetic material without requiring scientists to handle live virus.

West Nile virus does not affect most livestock species except horses. Dogs and cats are rarely infected.

"Quite a few horses have been infected as the virus has spread across the country," Steffen said. Many equine infections are subclinical, but there is a 40 percent death rate in clinically infected horses.

Steffen recommends that horse owners have their horses vaccinated against West Nile virus.

"There have been 55 diagnosed cases in humans in New York, and seven of those people died," Steffen said. In 2000, there were 21 human cases of West Nile virus in the United States and two deaths, according to the CDC. "So people who fall into one of the risk categories, elderly or immuno-suppressed, will want to reduce their exposure to mosquitoes by wearing repellent and long sleeves."

Horses and humans are dead-end carriers of the disease, he said,

meaning the infection is not contagious when present in those species.

Nebraska residents can help the center monitor the progress of the virus by reporting dead birds to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission or local public health authorities.

"Nebraska Game and Parks will assist in safely getting the dead birds to the Veterinary Diagnostic Center for Testing," Steffen said. "If it is necessary for someone to handle a dead bird, they should use gloves, put the bird into a plastic bag and handle it as little as possible."

Reporting bird mortality will help public health monitors identify infection hot spots which can be sprayed to reduce mosquito numbers and minimize the risk to humans.

"This is not something to be scared of but something to be aware of," Steffen said. "Because the virus is new, we may see more cases this first year. But once it spreads, there will be more natural immunity and fewer cases in the future." (EK)



## Lancaster Conversation on Youth Development Jan. 31

Youth and adults who want to contribute to an effort to collect the nation's best ideas in youth development can join the Lancaster Conversation on Youth Development in the 21st Century on Thursday, Jan. 31 from 7–9 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Rd., Lincoln.

As part of its centennial celebration, 4-H is leading

conversations in all 3,067 counties of our nation. In the Local Conversation, youth and adults are being asked to describe what youth need to achieve success in their lives. This will be the first time any organization has developed a series of recommendations starting at the ground floor — where everyone lives — working its way up to one national report.

The Local Conversations will lead to State Conversations, and then, on Feb. 28–March 3, the National Conversation will take place in Washington D.C., presenting a national report to President Bush and the Congress.

For more information about the Lancaster Conversation, call 441-7180.

## 4-H Achievement Night Feb. 5

4-H What's It All About/Achievement Night will held Tuesday, Feb. 5 at 7 p.m.

4-H members will be recognized for their achievements. County awards, Outstanding 4-H Members, I Dare You and Meritorious Service awards will be presented.

There will be presentations

and displays of activities that have taken place throughout the year. Come see a demonstration, dance and song groups, judging, speeches, and more!

This is an opportunity for all clubs, new or established, to see what opportunities 4-H has to offer and how members, leaders, and parents can participate.

A 4-H Centennial Celebration will be held in conjunction with Achievement Night, featuring door prizes and 4-H alumni exhibits. Hors d'oeuvres will be served from 5:30–7 p.m. (TK)



Garfield cookie jar door prize!

## 4-H...The Power of YOUTH 1902 - 2002

### CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION in conjunction with 4-H WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT/ ACHIEVEMENT NIGHT Tuesday, Feb. 5

- Hors d'oeuvres, 5:30-7:00 pm
- Exhibits featuring 4-H alumni projects, photographs, stories and scrapbooks
- Door prizes, including 4-H Garfield buttons and a collector's edition 4-H Garfield cookie jar
- 4-H Clover Mint ice cream and cookies wrap up the evening



Garfield button door prizes!

## February 3–9 is “4-H Centennial Week”

Nebraska Gov. Mike Johanns and City of Lincoln Mayor Don Wesely have proclaimed the week of Feb. 3–9 as “4-H Centennial Week.”

Lancaster County 4-H will have a Centennial Celebration on Feb. 5 (see information at right).

For more ideas on celebrating the 4-H Centennial, see suggestions at right or visit <http://4h.unl.edu/centennial.htm>

## Old 4-H Exhibits Sought

Exhibits of 4-H alumni projects, photographs, stories, scrapbooks, clothing and other memorabilia will be displayed at 4-H Centennial events throughout the year, including the Centennial Celebration on Feb. 5.

If you have old 4-H items or stories to share (from any county), please call Ellen or Arlene at 441-7180.

We need your help to celebrate 100 years of 4-H!



## Celebrate With Ice Cream

4-H Clover Mint — creamy mint ice cream with chocolate truffles and white chocolate chunks — is now offered at the UNL Dairy Store on East Campus in honor of the 4-H Centennial! Be sure to taste this delicious treat! To order large quantities of 4-H Clover Mint, please contact Michelle Ziemann at 472-2267.

## Make a Power of Youth Pledge

The Power of Youth Pledge Campaign is one of 4-H's gifts to the nation in honor of its Centennial. 4-H participants in all 3,067 counties in America are pledging hours of combined community service and leadership hours.

You can pledge to help an elderly neighbor rake their yard or pledge to organize a statewide project to collect food for the hungry.

Sign up today online at [www.4hcentennial.org/powerofyouth/main.asp](http://www.4hcentennial.org/powerofyouth/main.asp).

## Send an E-Postcard

You can send a 4-H e-postcard at [www.4hcentennial.org/getinvolved/postcards/create\\_postcard.asp](http://www.4hcentennial.org/getinvolved/postcards/create_postcard.asp) to a friend or family member!







## Community Focus

### STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

#### Lancaster County Extension Welcomes New Board Members

The Lancaster County Board of Commissioners recently appointed two new members to the Lancaster Extension Board:



Emilia Gonzalez-Clements, Interim Director of the Hispanic Community Center. She is also an applied anthropologist with her own consulting company.



Dean C. Lesoing of rural Hickman, farmer, dairyman and auctioneer. Dean is a graduate of the University of Nebraska, College of Agriculture and Nebraska LEAD Program fellowship recipient.

Extension board members assist the county extension staff in establishing and accomplishing extension education program goals and objectives. They work in partnership with University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension on priority issue areas of:

- Agriculture Profitability and Sustainability
- Children, Youth and Families
- Food Safety, Health and Wellness
- Strengthening Communities
- Water Quality and Environment

Current extension board members reappointed to three year terms were Deb Arends and Gaylen Suhr of Lincoln. (GB)

## 2002 Master Conservationist Award Nominations due April 1

Sponsored by the Omaha World-Herald and the University of Nebraska Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Master Conservationist program was established in 1983 to recognize those who have excelled in soil and water conservation. Award categories include production agriculture, residential, community and youth.

For guidelines, applications



or more information, contact Dick Fleming, Institute of Agriculture & Natural Resources at 472-8742 or email [rfleming1@unl.edu](mailto:rfleming1@unl.edu).

Award recipients will be recognized during a special presentation at the Nebraska Association of Resource Districts annual banquet Sept. 23, at the Kearney Holiday Inn, and will be featured in the Omaha World-Herald on Sept. 22.

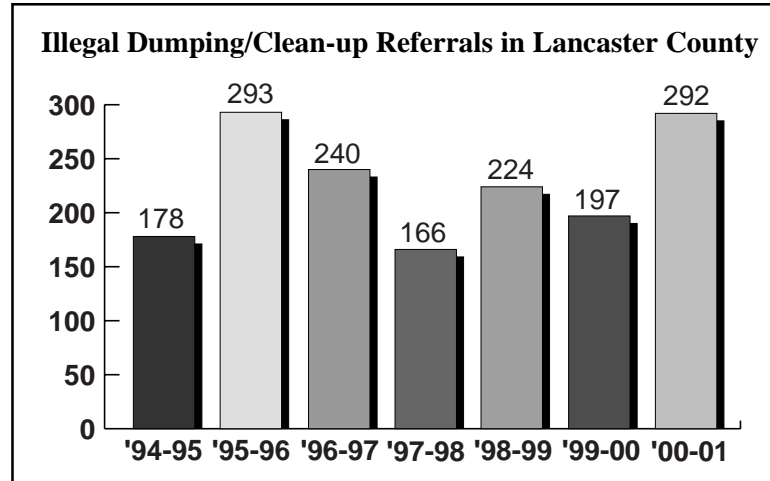
Deadline for nominations is April 1. (GB)

## Illegal Dumping Costs You Money

Illegal dumping cost the county nearly \$10,000 last year. Even with one of the lowest landfill gate fees in the region, illegal dumpers continue to make us pay to clean up their mess instead of taking the responsibility themselves.

The Keep Lincoln and Lancaster County Beautiful program at the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department coordinates an educational campaign to educate the public on how to report illegal dumping. This campaign has been funded by the Lancaster County Commissioners for six years and includes the use of billboards, bumper stickers, car litter bags and roadside signs to get the message out. A public service announcement is currently running on Cable Channel 5 and will further educate the public to report illegal dumpers and serve as a deterrent to those that might dump.

Examples of past notable cases which resulted in successful prosecutions include a report of an individual who was dumping shingles into a ravine. Due to a citizen's prompt call, the Sheriff was able to catch the individual red handed. In another case, a citizen reported a large number of tires having been dumped into a ditch. After an investigation by the Sheriff's



office an individual was cited and went to court. Both of these cases resulted in a \$200 fine with the individuals having to clean up their mess. These two successes would not have happened if not for the diligence of citizens who reported the cases to the Sheriff's office.

As a result of these educational efforts, there has been an increase in the number of calls reporting locations where items were illegally dumped. (See graph.) Efforts are underway to expand the message with a goal of reducing illegal dumping.

The Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department serves as the central agency for reporting locations of illegal dump sites in Lancaster County. This information is forwarded to a licensed waste hauler who has

been contracted to clean up illegally dumped items.

To report something that has been dumped along a roadside in Lancaster County and needs to be cleaned up, call the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department at 441-8022. The specific location and address will be needed.

To report an illegal dumping in progress or a suspicious vehicle, or if you have information on an illegal dumping, call the Sheriff's non-emergency number at 441-6500.

**Report Illegal Dumpers**  
**441-6500**

## Non-Game Wildlife Funds Crucial to Conservation

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission needs your help in conserving non-game wildlife. Protecting this precious component of the state's wildlife demands spending 10 times or more of what we currently can afford.

Non-game species include the majority of the state's birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish—those species not commonly hunted, trapped or fished. Insects, invertebrates such as mussels and plants also fall under the non-game category. By law, revenue from hunting and fishing licenses—which is more than 30 times revenue for non-game species—cannot be spent directly on non-game.

This makes the Non-game & Endangered Species Conservation Fund the state's primary source of funding for monitoring, studying and conserving such spectacular species as the whooping crane, peregrine falcon, bald eagle, swift fox, river otter, Western prairie fringed orchid and blowout penstemon.

The Fund also supports tracking the distribution and abundance of over 550 species that are rare, threatened or endangered in Nebraska like yellow mud turtles, Salt Creek tiger beetles, short-horned lizards and southern flying squirrels. Many of these 550 species have already disappeared from neighboring states.

Contributions to the Non-

game Fund have been declining, putting in jeopardy the future of this critical monitoring, and the future for these species in Nebraska. Ironically, federal matching funds for non-game wildlife are increasing but our ability to take advantage of them lessens as we have fewer state funds with which to provide the necessary match. Never has the Non-game Fund been so important!

Non-game funds do not just pay for monitoring rare or declining species. Specific projects made possible by these funds in 2001 include:

- bird community surveys of the short-grass prairies of western Nebraska, in partnership with the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, focusing on mountain plovers, ferruginous hawks, burrowing owls and longspurs. This program also

includes outreach to private landowners to promote management practices that benefit grassland birds.

- an extensive search for new populations of the endangered American burying beetles and study of the habitats they need to survive. Nebraska is one of the last refuges for this species, although it formerly ranged across much of the eastern United States.

- the development of a conservation plan for the black-tailed prairie dog that would prevent its further decline in Nebraska and help safe-guard its prairie habitat.

- a study of the population dynamics and habitat needs of the ornate box turtle. This species has one of its last

see NON-GAME on page 11

### Contributions to the Non-game & Endangered Species Conservation Fund can be made by:

- 1) Looking for the "Check for Wildlife" symbol on your state income tax return (or alerting your tax preparer) and designating all or part of your refund to the Fund. It's as easy as writing in the amount.

- 2) Sending a check, payable to the "Non-game Species Conservation Fund," directly to the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, PO Box 30370, Lincoln, NE, 68503-0370.

Remember, anyone can contribute and every dollar goes directly to conserving Nebraska's non-game wildlife. You can make a difference!





## HAZARDOUS TREES

continued from page 2

equipment used around trees often severs or injures a large portion of the roots. Without the support of the entire root system, the tree is structurally weakened and the probability of failure increases as the amount of injured roots increases. Trees that have lost 50 percent or more of their root systems during construction should be removed.

## Poor Branch Attachment

To have a strong attachment, a branch must be smaller (40 to 50 percent smaller) than the trunk or limb from which it arises. If the branch and trunk are close to the same size, their attachment may be weak and breakage may occur. Competing leaders and upright-growing branches with acute angles of attachment also are areas of potential weakness. Some tree species such as horsechestnut, silver maple, linden, tuliptree and willow are more likely to break because of their inherent poor branching habits. These species should be examined carefully when they are young so that structural flaws can be corrected.

## Reducing the Risk

Early detection of tree defects can prevent tree failures and potential damage to property and injury to people and pets. Reducing the risk associated with hazardous trees might take one of the following forms:

- **Remove the target** —

While homes or power lines cannot be moved, sometimes picnic tables, cars, landscape features, play areas, etc. can be relocated to prevent them from being crushed by a falling tree.

- **Remove the tree** — Some hazardous trees are best removed from the landscape. Remember, "when in doubt, take it out!"

- **Prune the tree** — Removing defective branches might alleviate a hazardous situation.

Trees that are suspected of being hazardous should be examined by a certified arborist. If the tree is located near a power line, contact your local utility. (MJF)



## GOOD SPORT

continued from page 7

positive aspects of their performance. Parents should never make fun of or yell at a child for something done when participating in a sporting event. Parents should applaud the efforts of all players—no matter who wins.

Respect authority. When talking to a child's coach, parents should be respectful and non-critical and should support the decisions and calls the umpire or referee makes. Becoming irate and saying irrational things, sets a bad example that children observe and often emulate.

Encourage fair competition. It is through competition children learn to do their very best and achieve goals they have set for themselves. However, competition should always be fair for all involved. (LJ)

## CONIFER DISEASES

continued from page 2

Sphaeropsis tip blight is most common on Austrian and ponderosa pines but also occurs on Scots, mugo and red pine. The most obvious symptom of tip blight is stunted, brown shoots with short needles. In the fall, small black fruiting structures of the fungus usually can be seen on needle bases. Small black fruiting structures also appear on scales of infected cones. The annual destruction of buds and shoots gradually causes tree decline. There are a number of measures that can be taken to prevent and control needle diseases:

- Promote good air circulation by adequate spacing and weed control.

- Improve tree vigor through good cultural practices such as mulching and watering as needed.

- Do not shear trees when foliage is wet.

- Do not plant Austrian pine.

- Do not plant susceptible species next to infected trees.

- If symptoms appear, fungicides applied in the spring will protect the newly emerging growth.

For Dothistroma needle blight, apply Bordeaux mixture or other copper-containing fungicides in mid-May and four to six weeks later.

For Sphaeropsis tip blight, spray thiophanate-methyl, benomyl, Bordeaux mixture or copper fungicides when buds start to swell, one week later, then two to three weeks later. (DJ)



## NON-GAME FUNDS

continued from page 10

strongholds in Nebraska's grasslands.

- the publishing of Nebraska's Breeding Bird Atlas, an effort to map, in detail for the first time, all of Nebraska's breeding birds.

Non-game funds have also been used to build conservation partnerships and heighten environmental awareness among Nebraskans. The Non-game Bird Conservation and Education Program, a partnership between NGPC and the University of Nebraska, is dedicated to increasing the awareness, appreciation and stewardship of Nebraska's birds through education, outreach and conservation.

The Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership brings private industry together with wildlife managers and educators to address the challenges of endangered species management in a non-confrontational manner. This partnership has also brought together volunteers from the Nebraska Ornithologist Union, Wachiska Audubon, Omaha Audubon and the Girl Scouts to help protect least tern and piping plover nest sites at sand and gravel mining operations.

The Nebraska Bluebird Directory, containing results of Bluebirds Across Nebraska's statewide breeding survey, is printed and distributed annually with non-game funding.

## SEPTIC TANK CARE

continued from page 5

treatment system is reaching its maximum capacity, try to spread the washing out during the week to avoid overloading the sewage system on a single day.

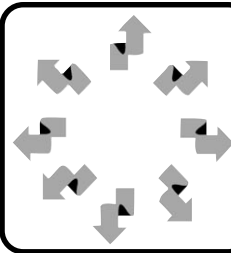
- Baths and showers can use lots of water. "Setting up camp" in the shower with a shower head flow of five gallons per minute will require 100 gallons in 20 minutes. Shower heads that limit the flow to 1.5 or two gallons per minute are available and should be used. Filling the tub not quite so full and limiting the length of showers, will result in appreciable water savings.

- Is the water from the faucet cold enough to drink? How long do you let it run to cool down? Keep a container of drinking water in the refrigerator. Then it won't be necessary to run water from your faucets in order to get a cool drink.

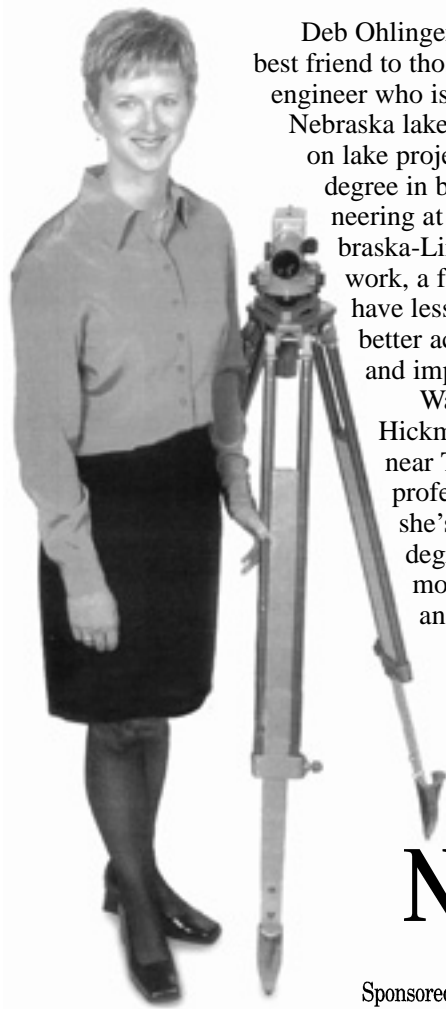
- There may be other ways to conserve water that you can think of in your home. The main idea is to consider water as a valuable resource and not to waste it.

Following a few simple rules like not using too much water and not depositing materials in the septic tank that bacteria can't decompose, should help to make a septic system trouble-free for many years. But don't forget the septic tank does need to be cleaned out when too many solids build up. Septic tanks need tender, loving care, too! (DJ)

## Miscellaneous



## There's Nothing Fishy About This Nebraska Grad's Work.



Deb Ohlinger doesn't fish, but she is a best friend to those who do. She is a civil engineer who is helping to restore Nebraska lakes—she got her feet wet on lake projects while completing her degree in biological systems engineering at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Thanks to Deb's work, a few of Nebraska's lakes have less sediment in the water, better access to deeper waters and improved fish habitat.

Wagon Train Lake near Hickman and Summit Lake near Tekamah are two on her professional projects list, plus she's finishing a master's degree at NU to become even more of an expert on water and civil engineering.

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## Safely Moving Snow

In tight spaces and for meticulous results, the shovel is still the best tool for moving snow. The only disadvantage of this method is that it is hard work in a harsh environment. The most common serious health threat related to shoveling is heart failure due to overexertion. Men are more likely to suffer heart attacks than women. A less serious, but more common problem, is strained muscles and soreness.

When shoveling snow, safety experts recommend these commonsense guidelines regardless of your physical condition:

- Dress for the task. Wear clothing in layers to allow better evaporation of perspiration. Wear shoes, boots or overshoes with rubber soles (not leather or hard compositions).

- Use a lightweight shovel made of plastic or aluminum that has a Teflon coating. If the aluminum shovel doesn't have a Teflon coating, rub the surface with paraffin (wax) or coat it with a silicon spray.

- Use a shovel of modest size. Don't try to heap snow on the shovel. Lightening the load will reduce the strain on your muscles, including your heart.

- When lifting the shovel, use your entire body. Let your back and legs share the work.

- Don't work to the point

of exhaustion. Take frequent rests and go inside to warm up. Cold and overexertion are hard on your heart.

If you need to remove stubborn layers of ice or packed snow, a narrow steel scraper blade works well to loosen the ice before you move it away with a shovel. Ice melting compounds will ease ice removal as well.

Powered snowblowers can greatly reduce the time and effort expended to move snow. While they are great labor savers, snowblowers are, by design, aggressive and dangerous machines. They all operate on the theory of passing the snow through a high-speed impeller to throw it a considerable distance and out of the way. These impellers and the augers that sometimes draw snow into the impeller will cut and even remove fingers when moving. The most common and severe injuries associated with snowblowers are finger cuts and amputations.

Experts list these precautions for snowblower operation:

- Never allow children to operate a snowblower. Make sure all operators have had proper instruction and have read the operator's manual.

- Stop the engine before attempting to clean foreign objects or snow from the machine. Coming in contact with the turning blades inside the discharge chute is the most

common cause of injuries associated with snowblowers.

- Wear proper clothing and footwear. In a study of snowblower accidents, about one-fifth of injury victims lost their footing and stuck their hands into the discharge chute while trying to steady themselves.

- Maintain and use safety controls that stop the snowblower if the operator slips and falls or releases the controls for any reason.

- Clear the area of any debris before you begin snow removal. Some machines can throw rocks up to 75 feet.

- When clearing a gravel area, don't try to remove all the snow. Set the blades about an inch above the gravel.

- Shut off equipment before making repairs or mechanical adjustments. Clean off excess slush prior to storage.

- Remove the key as a safeguard against unauthorized use. If the system doesn't have a key ignition, remove the spark plug wire from the plug.

About half the accidents involving snow removal equipment happen to first-time users or those using the equipment for the first time each winter. Take time to review the safety precautions and you can reduce your risk of personal injury. (DJ)



# The NEBLINE

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Lancaster County



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NUFACTS Information Center: 441-7188  
Composting Hotline: 441-7139  
**Website: lancaster.unl.edu**

All programs and events listed in this newsletter will be held  
(unless noted otherwise) at:  
**Lancaster Extension Education Center**  
444 Cherrycreek Rd., Rooms A–C (event rooms posted)  
Lincoln, Nebraska  
Lobby Phone: 441-7170

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**Return to:**  
University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County  
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# Extension Calendar

All programs and events will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center unless otherwise noted.

## JANUARY

Jan. 15 4-H Citizenship Washington Focus (CWF) Meeting ..... 7 p.m.  
Jan. 17 Fair Board Meeting (Lancaster Event Center) ..... 7:30 p.m.  
Jan. 23 4-H Chess Club Meeting ..... 7 p.m.  
Jan. 28 Family Community Education (FCE) Council Meeting ..... 12 noon  
Jan. 29 Family Community Education (FCE) Leader Training Lesson:  
“Positive Communication in Families” ..... 1 p.m.  
Jan. 31 Lancaster Conversation on Youth Development in the 21st Century ... 7 p.m.

## FEBRUARY

Feb. 3–9 **4-H CENTENNIAL WEEK**  
Feb. 5 4-H Centennial Celebration ..... 5:30 p.m.  
4-H What’s It All About/Achievement Night ..... 7 p.m.  
4-H Council Meeting  
Feb. 6 Commerical PAT-Recertification ..... 9 a.m.– 5 p.m.  
Feb. 7 Commerical PAT-Recertification ..... 9 a.m.– 5 p.m.  
Feb. 8 Extension Board Meeting ..... 8 a.m.  
Feb. 9 4-H Cattle Weigh-In (Lancaster Event Center) ..... 8–11 a.m.  
Feb. 9–10 Horsin’ Around Clinic (East Campus)  
Feb. 10 4-H Ambassador Meeting ..... 2 p.m.  
4-H Teen Council Meeting ..... 3–5 p.m.  
4-H Speech Workshop ..... 6–7:30 p.m.  
Feb. 12 4-H Pet Pals Club Meeting ..... 6:45 p.m.  
4-H Cat Club Meeting ..... 7 p.m.  
Feb. 13 4-H Horse VIPS Meeting ..... 7 p.m.  
Feb. 14 4-H Rabbit VIPS Meeting ..... 7 p.m.  
Feb. 15–16 4-H Volunteer Forum (Grand Island)  
Feb. 16 Private PAT-Recertification ..... 8:30–11:30 a.m.

## Lancaster Extension Food Safety & Nutrition Site “Among the Best”

Created to help the public quickly sort and find information they can trust, Tufts University Nutrition Navigator ([www.navigator.tufts.edu](http://www.navigator.tufts.edu)) is the first online rating guide that evaluates nutrition Web sites based on accuracy, depth and usefulness of information.

The University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County’s Food Safety and Nutrition Web site at [www.lancaster.unl.edu/food](http://www.lancaster.unl.edu/food) scored 22 points out of a possible 25 points to earn an “Among The Best” rating.

The criteria were developed by a prestigious advisory board of U.S. and Canadian nutrition experts. “University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County is a leader in the electronic nutrition informa-

tion arena,” said Jeanne Goldberg, director of the Center on Nutrition Communication at the Tufts University School of Nutrition Science and Policy. “‘Among The Best’ ratings are only awarded to Web sites that serve as outstanding resources and maintain a high level of integrity in nutrition reporting”

Lancaster County’s Food Safety and Nutrition Web site features a “Cook It Quick” section; archives of “Food

Reflections, an e-mail newsletter; and links to Food Safety and/or Nutrition online publications and Web sites.

“We are proud to be recognized by the Tufts University Nutrition Navigator,” said Alice



Henneman, Lancaster County extension educator. “Representing the best of nutrition Web sites on the Internet raises our commitment to provide reliable, timely information.”

## Lancaster Conversation on Youth Development in the 21st Century



THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON  
**YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

**Thursday, Jan. 31 • 7–9 p.m.**  
Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Rd., Lincoln.

• Refreshments • 4-H Clover Mint Ice Cream • Door Prizes  
**Please call 441-7180 to RSVP by Friday, Jan. 25.**  
Discussion topics will then be mailed to you.